

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 28, 2016

Donald J. Trump
President-elect of the United States
Trump Tower
725 5th Avenue
New York, NY 10022

Dear President-elect Trump,

Your campaign presented itself as a repudiation of failed establishment thinking and it promised to chart a new path forward. In the case of foreign policy, you argued at the Republican primary debate in Las Vegas that the Iraq War was a “tremendous disservice not only to the Middle East,” but “to humanity.”

As a result of the U.S. invasion, you said, “the Middle East is totally destabilized” and cost taxpayers \$4-5 trillion, which could have been “spent right here in the United States on schools, hospitals, roads, airports, and everything else that are all falling apart.” You concluded in a foreign-policy campaign speech that “our current strategy of nation-building and regime change is a proven failure.”

As leaders of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, we are therefore surprised and dismayed over reports that your transition team may be considering advocates of the Iraq War, such as Rudy Giuliani and John Bolton, for key positions to guide the foreign policy of your administration. Their records and stated policy views are antithetical to the statements that you conveyed to voters.

Many years after the Iraq War's launch, these potential candidates remain unrepentant with regard to the greatest foreign-policy failure in modern U.S. history. This fact alone calls into serious doubt their ability to pursue prudent alternatives to escalations of conflict.

In 2007, when the chaos in Iraq had become undeniable, Rudy Giuliani described the invasion as “absolutely the right thing to do,” and “one of the greatest military actions in American history.” He espoused the need to “take on that responsibility of nation-building,” a position popular with only 28 percent of the public, and one that contradicts your campaign pledge.

John Bolton is among the earliest intellectual architects of the Iraq invasion as a director of the neoconservative Project for the New American Century. He called for “removing Saddam's regime from power” in 1998, before entering President George W. Bush's State Department. In 2015, he said, “I still think the decision to overthrow Saddam was correct” in spite of no existence of weapons of mass destruction.

Such voices represent a disproved consensus that favors recklessly militaristic approaches to handling current international conflicts and has yet to reckon with the grave consequences of its

errors. For this reason, we do not believe these kinds of candidates are equipped to direct statecraft and diplomacy.

As you noted to your colleagues during the primary campaign, "the war in Iraq was a big, fat mistake," and while "we can make mistakes," many prominent proponents of that war "said there were weapons of mass destruction and there were none. And they knew there were none."

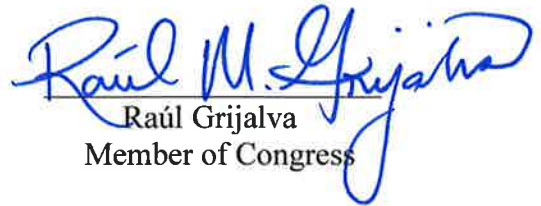
We urge you to reexamine that deceit and rush toward regime change during this nomination process, and to reject the discredited voices on foreign policy that have caused irreparable harm to this country and many others.

Your campaign vowed to avoid needless confrontations and disregard the "so-called insiders" who "got us into trouble." We ask that you honor this campaign promise by withdrawing consideration of consistent and unapologetic advocates of war as your nominees to guide the foreign policy of the United States of America.

Sincerely,



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress